



Monthly Report March 2010

The following is a brief summary of activity of the Prevention Director and the BAY Team members in the month of March 2010.

Community:

Prescription Drug Use Subcommittee

Members of the Bay Team formed a new committee to address the emerging trend of prescription drug misuse. The group will plan an education and awareness campaign. Members are discussing the safe disposal of unused prescription medications and the proper storage and locking of prescribed meds.



The group is looking into the purchase of combination lock boxes to offer to parents with younger children to get them into the habit of locking prescription meds. 7-% of teens who have abused prescription drugs have taken them from friends of family. This lock box will help reduce access to these drugs for teens.

Marijuana Subcommittee

The BAY Team subcommittee on Marijuana is working to address youth and adult use of marijuana in the community. Members are trying to keep pace with the legislative proposals being made to decriminalize marijuana following the Senate Panel on the Prohibition of Marijuana's recommendations.

The commission heard from David Lewis of the Alcohol and Addiction Studies Center at Brown. His basic message was that the acute effects are only in naive users and in heavy users, but that road crashes are definitely associated with cannabis intoxication.

For chronic effects he stressed that there is only a 9% risk of addiction, which is much lower than for alcohol, and that the only other proven effect is bronchitis. All else such as cancer, impaired educational attainment, etc. are only possible at this point but not proven, and he said, not likely. He said the gateway theory has too many other possible confounders, so it cannot be proven. The clear message that the proponents of decriminalization heard was that marijuana is much safer than alcohol. Their logic, therefore, is that since alcohol is legal,

marijuana should be too. They seemed to not be worried about the definite problem of increased road fatalities.

The Commission heard from Jeffrey Miron from Harvard who presented on the fiscal effects of decriminalization on the state budget. His analysis revealed an \$11 million potential savings in police costs. However, he cautioned that those dollars may never be realized because of many factors and that this amount is relatively very small.

Legislators will most likely use cost savings as a selling point when pushing the bills through.

There were several law enforcement representatives on the commission who objected to decriminalization. Joe Moran of the RI State Police Assn noted that because there is no good test for marijuana intoxication like the breathalyzer for alcohol, more police will be needed to be sent for training in drug recognition efforts which will be an additional cost to municipalities.

The House introduced bill H7317 one of several bills to decriminalize marijuana. The possession of less than one ounce of marijuana would result in a \$150 fine as a civil offense. The intent is that the municipalities would pursue and collect these fines.

The BAY Team is trying to mobilize members to educate legislators on how detrimental this legislation will be to the health of Rhode Islander's youth. When teens perception of the risk of harm of a drug is reduced, use of that drug increases. We are observing this with marijuana use. The recent student survey conducted by the BAY Team in the schools found that 44% of BHS seniors admit past 30 day use of marijuana. Knowing that most of the medical community, the law enforcement community, the prevention community and others are against this may hopefully prevent the decriminalization of marijuana.

In addition the Marijuana Subcommittee members continue to work on a toolkit for parents of 6th graders and 9th graders to offer education and prevention strategies for parents. The kit will offer a range of information on the risks of marijuana use and prevention strategies. However, The BAY Team was unsuccessful in its application to the RI Foundation for funding to create and disseminate the Marijuana Prevention Tool kit.

There will also be a Community Leaders' Roundtable Discussion on Marijuana on April 1st at the Atria Bay Spring. This will be an opportunity to bring together pediatricians, general practitioners, law enforcement, school officials, and treatment providers to share information on recent trends in youth marijuana use and start formulating community prevention plans.



Youth Engagement

BAY Youth are busy creating Social Norms prevention media, including Facebook pages, library screen savers, public service announcements and a poster campaign. The campaign will raise awareness about the fact that only 30% on Barrington High school students report past 30 day use of alcohol.

Monthly Parenting Tips

The monthly Parenting tip for March focuses on Parental Expectations. Parenting tips are produced electronically for all of the school newsletters. They are also published with the support of Verizon and included in the Barrington Times every month.

Schools:

Prevention Art Competition!

The BAY Team is hosting an *East Bay Prevention Art Competition* in partnership with the prevention task forces from Warren and Bristol and the Elks. The Elks are very kindly assisting us with the purchase of the prizes.

Children in the elementary schools are being asked to draw a picture showing how they **stay safe and have fun**. Middle school students are being asked to draw a picture showing how they **have fun without alcohol**. Winners from each school will win a pair of movie tickets and have their poster printed in our Summer Media Insert. The Media Insert will be a prevention guide highlighting summer safety strategies for parents and community members and will be in all three East Bay Newspapers in May.

Mandatory Meeting for Parents of Spring Athletes

Bay Team volunteers helped produce a Marijuana Public Service Announcement which was shown at the Spring Sports Meeting. Parent surveys to collect data on the effectiveness of prevention efforts were also disseminated and collected.

Nayatt 5K

The BAY Team had a promotional table at the recent Nayatt 5K. Over two hundred people were in attendance. Volunteer youth members handed out information and promotional materials at this fun, community event. It was also an opportunity to solicit feedback from parents about parenting tips and a new lock box for prescription meds that we hope to distribute to parents of younger children.

Kick Butts Day

Youth members of the BAY Team celebrated Kick Butts Day (KBD), a nationwide initiative that makes kids leaders in the effort to stop youth tobacco use. As part of the Kick Butts Day celebration, the high school's BAY Youth members set up a Tobacco Awareness table in the main foyer of the high school.

BAY Youth displayed the harmful chemicals in cigarettes. Students distributed eight hundred packets of gum with an anti-tobacco message.



Bay Youth students also went on the high school's *Morning Show* to explain Kick Butts Day and share some alarming stats about youth tobacco use. They also gave out temporary tattoos with a Kick Butts message. Once again a student dressed as "Ciggy Butts." They will urged students who smoke to join a smoking cessation group with the Student Assistance Counselor, Joanne Royley.



The CHOICE students, middle school youth involved in prevention efforts, created T-shirts highlighting different hazards of cigarettes and the powerful statistic that 98% of BMS students don't smoke. They decorated the school's entryway with chalk stating positive facts about the majority of kids not smoking and decline in teen use. Students also placed "chalk Body" outlines with tobacco facts inside all around the building.



Prevention and Theatre

As part of her senior project, BHS student Jasmin Tandler has written a play called *The White Steps* that focuses on a youth with a substance use issue. She is also directing the play, *The Brick and the Rose*, which highlights the fatal consequences of addiction. A brief version of *The Brick* will be shown to middle school and high school students as a prevention assembly. The plays will also be performed for the public in a double bill. The BAY Team has purchased the scripts and will assist with an educational intermission for the plays.

Law Enforcement:

Members of the Barrington Police attended an Underage Drinking Prevention training in Newport. The training was hosted by the Newport Substance Abuse Prevention task force and looked at issues such as Controlled Party Ordinances.